

Citizens' Health Care Working Group
Portland, OR
Public Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2005
Afternoon Meeting

Attendees

Members

Catherine McLaughlin, Vice Chair
Frank Baumeister, M.D.
Dorothy Bazos
Montye Conlan
Therese Hughes
Patricia Maryland
Deborah Stehr
Christine Wright

Staff

George Grob, Executive Director
Andy Rock
Caroline Taplin
Jessica Federer
Craig Caplan
Jill Bernstein

Catherine McLaughlin, the vice chairperson, opened the public meeting at 1:20 p.m. This afternoon meeting of the Working Group focused on the content of the Invitation.

Concern was expressed that any decisions made by those present should not be able to be unilaterally changed or vetoed by the chairperson. The Working Group members discussed whether to make edits to the Invitation as drafted by the public relation contractor or whether to start from the "Salt Lake City" version for this purpose. Members expressed concern that emphasizing the Invitation (still referred to as the "short report at this time) as the main document for the media and for policy makers was a mistake. Where was the "scholarly" document that had been originally discussed?

It was clarified that for statutory purposes, the longer Report included the elements required by the law and also did not involve expenditure of funds not appropriated for the purpose. The Invitation (various still being referred to as the "executive summary," "discussion guide," "report in brief," and "comic book") could be made available in large numbers and would be accessible (i.e: readable) to a wide audience. It was pointed out that there could be a three-page bulleted press release as well.

The members present voted with a show of hands that the order in which the issues should be discussed in the documents was: cost, quality, and access. This was observed to be distinct from two areas that needed to be added to the report: “the system” and also something about “where does the money come from and where does it go?” The group began a section-by-section discussion and partial revision of the version of the Invitation that was provided to the public affairs contractor on September 22 for focus testing. There was a discussion of the documents to be used for the October 6 roll-out.

During this discussion, the members agreed that what had hitherto been referred to as the “short report” be called “An Invitation to Action to the American People.” Other changes included moving some sections, deleting or modifying a bullet under the cost section, and deleting phrases such as “silver bullet” and “can’t have our cake and eat it too.”

There was also a discussion regarding the questions at the end of the Invitation. The Working Group decided to ask the four questions from the law and also keep the additional three questions that are in the Invitation. The Members also agreed that, until such time that there could be a full discussion on a broader array of questions that these same 7 questions would be on the Working Group web site, <http://www.CitizensHealthCare.gov> (at the “public comment center”). It was pointed out that the report should not encourage “blame shifting” any more than it advocated “cost shifting.” Therefore, the lifestyle decision section should be modified so it does not appear to point the finger at individuals for conditions where there is broader social involvement. In addition, the members felt that all the personal stories should come out of the Invitation. Members were invited to submit additional comments for the document so it could be modified appropriately. Results of the focus group would be available Friday afternoon. This Invitation would be one of the documents included in the press kit for the October 6 event.

The vice chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.